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THE VIRGINIANS ON THE OHIO AND THE MISSISSIPPI IN 1742

By Fairfax Harrison

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THE VIRGINIANS ON THE OHIO AND THE MISSISSIPPI IN 1742

By Fairfax Harrison.

In his *History of the Valley of Virginia,* first published in 1833,[1] Samuel Kercheval recorded a tradition he had from a Valley pioneer, William Heath, of Hardy, that "a man by the name of John Howard, and his son, previous to the first settlement of our Valley, explored the country and discovered the charming Valley of the South Branch, crossed the Alleghany Mountains and on the Ohio killed a very large buffalo bull, skinned him, stretched his hide over ribs of wood, made a kind of boat, and in this frail bark descended the Ohio and Mississippi to New Orleans, where they were apprehended by the French as suspicious characters and sent to France, but nothing criminal appearing against them, they were discharged. From hence they crossed over to England."

The early historians of western exploration generally ignored this story, though some of them mentioned it only to scout it.[2] But there was other testimony for Howard. Dr. L. C. Draper and Mr. Thwaites[3] both found references in eighteenth century English books, to "reports of the Virginia government" which they accepted as establishing the fact that

[1] The quotation will be found on p. 47 of the more accessible (but still unindexed) edition of 1902.

[2] *e. g.,* DeHass, *Western Virginia,* 1851, p. 48; Shaler, *Kentucky,* 1885, p. 59.

[3] R. G. Thwaites' *France in America* (Hart's American Nation Series), 1905, p. 40, citing a note by the anonymous English translator of LePage DuPratz *Histoire de la Louisiane* (originally published in Paris, 1758, the translation appearing in London, 1763, of which edition see for the reference to "Howard and Sallee," i, 105) and a brief quotation, in J. H. Wynne, *British Empire in America* (1770, ii, 405). from the report of "those who were sent from Virginia in 1742 on purpose to survey" the Mississippi. Dr. Draper's earlier investigations on the subject were printed in 1914 in *Mississippi Valley Historical Review,* i, 262.

Virginians named "Howard and Sallee" were on the Mississippi in 1742. In 1893, Mr. W. M. Darlington[4] printed, apparently from the Clarke transcripts made in the Public Record Office, London, a calendar of the Salley document, which is here presented, but he did not attempt to confirm it, nor, indeed, did he even comment upon it in his exhaustive review of the eighteenth century explorations out of Virginia, which preceded Christopher Gist's journey to the Ohio in 1750. Standing alone, stripped of the official reports which testified to its *provenance*, this paper was not convincing. Justin Winsor hesitated to accept it. "If the evidence is not to be disputed," he says,[5] "John Howard * * * was perhaps the first on the English part to travel the whole course of one of the great ramifications of the Valley. * * * An air of circumstantiality is given to the expedition in the journal of John Peter Salley, who was one of Howard's companions." Mr. Winsor's caution was justified also by the confusion in the Virginia folk traditions of the adventures of one called John Salling, on the inconsistencies of which the most judicious of the historians of the Valley of Virginia, Mr. J. A. Waddell[6] had already animadverted. These tales, told on winter evenings around border firesides, were preserved by Withers,[7] Foote,[8] Campbell,[9] and Schuricht;[10] while Dr. L. C. Draper[11] had taken down in 1848, from statements by "descendants of John Peter Salling," a curious farrago of them all, elaborated with new detail.

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[4] In an appendix to his edition of *Christopher Gists Journals* (Pittsburgh, 1893), p. 253. The Clarke transcripts had then been calendared in Fernow, *The Ohio Valley in Colonial Days* (Albany, 1890) with a reference only, at p. 260, to "an account of John P. Salley's travels."

[5] *The Mississippi Basin*, 1895, p. 318. The source of the "evidence" is not cited.

[6] *Annals of Augusta*, 1886 and 1902, p. 23.

[7] *Border Warfare*, 1831, p. 42. This, the most circumstantial, assigns to John Salling six years of captivity among the Cherokees with incidental travels from Canada to Florida. Winsor (*Mississippi Basin*, pp. 168, 179) apparently accepted this tradition as more probable than the one of the New Orleans journey, if, indeed, he appreciated that Salling and Salley were the same man.

[8] *Sketches of Virginia*, 2d Series, 1855, p. 26.

[9] *History of Virginia*, 1860, p. 427.

[10] *The German Element in Virginia*, 1898, i, 86.

[11] See Mr. Thwaites' note, based on Dr. Draper's MS, at p. 48 of his edition (1895) of Withers' *Border Warfare*.

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The one fact which could be taken to be established by this kind of testimony was that in the early days of the Augusta frontier, one John Peter Salley (or Salling) had gone thence on a far journey into the mysterious wilderness; but, fortunately for the credit of a good story, Kercheval's informant may now be corroborated by following up the clews.

The contemporary record begins with the Executive Journal of the Virginia Council:[12]

October 17, 1737.

"John Howard, by his Petition setting forth that he, together with divers other Inhabitants on Sherrando River, are willing at their own charge to go upon discoveries on the Lakes & River of Mississippi, and praying a Commission for that purpose, it is accordingly Ordered that a Commission be granted the said Howard to Command such men as shall be willing to accompany him on such discovery, but with this caution that he don't offer any Hostility to any Indians or others he may happen to meet with nor go to any ffort or Garrison possess'd by the ffrench on the said Lakes or River."

November 3, 1737.

"Ordered, That there be furnished to Mr. John Howard 40 lbs. powder & a proportonable quantity of bullets out of His Majesties Stores & four Kettles for the better enabling him to perform the Service in making discoveries towards the River Mississippi."

The *Gooch Papers*[13] develop the details. Here it appears that when, in May, 1751, in pursuance of Governor Gooch's long nursed plan to provide an adequate map of Virginia, Joshua Fry and Peter Jefferson produced the first draft of the well-known map bearing their names, Col. Fry accompanied it with "An Account of the Bounds of the Colony of Virginia & of its back settlements, & of the lands towards the

[12] *Va. Mag.*, xiv, 9, 16.
[13] British transcripts in the Library of Congress.

Mountains & Lakes" which was transmitted with the MS. map to the Lords of Trade by President Lewis Burwell, then acting lieutenant governor.[14] In this paper Fry states that he had based his depiction of the western waters and lands partly on conversations with his neighbour, Dr. Thomas Walker, of Albemarle, who had just returned from his explorations in Kentucky,[15] and partly on information derived from one John Peter Salley, described as "a German who lives in the County of Augusta in Virginia." Incidentally, Fry made a transcript of Salley's journal for 1742-1745,[16] in which were rehearsed his adventures on a wilderness journey with John Howard, under a commission from the Virginia government, which had taken them down the rivers New, Coal (which Salley named), Kanawha, Ohio and Mississippi and lead to their capture by the French, and imprisonment at New Orleans. Commenting upon this journal at large, Fry appended it to the copy of his *Account,* which was sent to London, where it constituted that "report of the Virginia government" which was read by the translator of DuPratz, by John Huddlestone Wynne and doubtby others who had access to the papers of the Board of Trade.

[14] See Burwell's despatch of 21 August, 1751, C. O. 5: 1327, L. C. Transcripts, p. 355 ff.

[15] Dr. Walker's *Journal* of his explorations in 1750, edited by William Cabell Rives, was printed in Boston, 1888. It was Dr. Walker who was selected in 1753 to lead the proposed expedition out of Virginia to explore the Missouri for a "carry" to the waters of the Pacific which was prevented by the outbreak of hostilities with the French in 1754. See James Maury in *Memoirs of a Huguenot Family,* Putnam's reprint, p. 391.

[16] Salley permitted others also to copy his journal. Mr. Thwaites says (in the note in his edition of Withers *Border Warfare*), "Salling kept a journal which was extant in 1745, for in the Wisconsin Historical Society's library is a diary kept by Capt. John Buchanan, who notes that in that year he spent two days in copying a part of it." Dr. John Mitchell, the Virginia botanist, also had seen it and made use of it in drawing that great map of 1755 on which the British government subsequently placed so much reliance. In his "Remarks on the Journal of Batts and Fallam" (Alvord, *First Explorations,* p. 204), Dr. Mitchell says "in 1739 or 1740 [sic] a Party of People were sent out by the Government of Virginia and traversed the whole Countrey down Wood River and the River Ohio to the Missisipi and down that River to New Orleans: whose journals I have seen and perused and have made a draught of the countrey from them and find they agree with other and later accounts."

Finally, there is now confirmation from the French side.[17] In 1742 LeMoyne de Bienville, the "father" of Louisiana, was at the end of his forty years of service on behalf of that colony. Having fallen into disfavor at Court, he had asked for his recall from his arduous duty as Governor, and was awaiting the arrival of a successor. The French colony was in domestic difficulties, and, through the diplomacy of James Adair, of Carolina, had recently been embroiled with its nearest Indian neighbours, the Choctaws. In this situation, a convoy returning down stream from the Illinois, captured Howard, Salley and their companions on the Mississippi, about one hundred and twenty miles above Natchez. In a despatch of 30 July, 1742, Bienville reports that his examination of the prisoners indicated that

"they had been sent on their perilous journey for the purpose of exploring the rivers flowing from Virginia into the Mississippi, and to reconnoiter the terrain looking to establishing a settlement, for the English pretend that their boundaries extend as far as the bank of the Mississippi. I have thought fit to have this affair investigated by a mixed council of military and civil officers to obviate misunderstandings among our own people and to allay the alarm excited by an enterprise which, though bold, after all was foolhardy. M. de Salmon has entered in our joint report on this subject his opinion that these five men were not alone, and that they had a rendezvous with the Indians. If they had been from Carolina I would agree with him, but the Virginians have no such knowledge of the country or of the tribes which dwell here as to have made such a rendezvous. Whatever may be the fact in this respect it is important that these rash men shall

[17] Gayarré (*History of Louisiana,* 1885, i, 523) mentioned the incident, and on that clew the despatches on which he relied have been found among the French transcripts recently acquired by the Library of Congress. The references are *Archives Nationales, Colonies,* C^{13} A, 28 folios 6, 71, 191, 273. Cordial acknowledgment is made to Dr. J. Franklin Jameson, Director of the Carnegie Institution of Washington, for calling attention to the availability of these documents.

It is probable that among the still undigested records of the French regime in Louisiana, now in the Cabildo at New Orleans, more may be found on the subject. Mr. Henry P. Dart, of the New Orleans bar, is making a gallant effort to arouse public opinion in Louisiana to the advantage of editing this cache of historical material.

not return home to bear witness of what they have learned among us. I shall send them to the fort at Natchitoches, whence I will have them escorted to the mines of New Mexico."

In February, 1743, Bienville reported again that the difficulty of sending the prisoners safely to New Mexico had determined him to await the arrival of his successor (Vaudreuil) before disposing of them and, in July, 1743, Vaudreuil in turn reports that there is danger that the prisoner may escape, wherefore he asked permssion to send them to France. On this despatch is annotated agreement by an official of the home government, *"Les renvoyer en France,"* and the final entry is a despatch by Vaudreuil of 29 December, 1744, reporting that two of the Virginian prisoners had escaped and the other three have been sent to France.

The details of the story are told in the principal documents here reproduced. We begin with a petition which John Howard (or, as the French transcript makes him sign himself, Hayward) wrote in prison in New Orleans, and to which he added the names of his companions. Doubtless he planned to have this paper smuggled out by a friendly hand and put in the way to reach England. That it is now available is due to the fact that it was intercepted by Vaudreuil, translated into French and forwarded to Paris. What follows is a translation of this translation, turning it back into English:

> "To his Royal Majesty, George II, by the Grace of God, King of Great Britain, of all the lands thereon depending, including America, and Defender of the Faith.

"May it please your Royal Majesty:

"I, John Hayward, your very humble subject, have been an inhabitant in the most western part of Virginia, where we were continually exposed to the fury of unknown savages, who more than a hundred times and in different places have murdered the subjects of your Majesty. Deeming for this reason that neither I nor my neighbours were safe, I considered that the best means of remedying this our condition was to go to visit these natives and to make a treaty with

them. I went accordingly to consult with our Governor and, having laid before him my reasons, he commissioned me to enlist a small company of volunteers to go into the back parts of Virginia, as far as the River Mississipy, there to visit the indians who lived in those parts to make peace with them and so establish a durable treaty. A commission was made out accordingly. This enterprise having been abandoned for reasons which it would be tiresome to relate, I returned to my home. But the savages continuing their inhuman murders and having killed six of my neighbors in one day in a meeting house, I informed the Governor of this accident, whereupon he gave me a new commission and sent me after the murderers in the direction of the highest branches of the river Mississippy. There I found several indian nations by whom I was informed that those who had struck the blow were of their people (I saw the scalps of those they had killed), and that the murderers, fearing we would take vengeance, had fled towards the lakes. Some of them were taken and punished.

"Not trusting in the safety either of myself or my neighbours, I determined then to carry out the journey originally planned, and, our Governor being called away by reason of the war with Spain,[18] I made use accordingly of my original commission, which was still in force, and set out on March 8, 1742. I continued my journey until July the fourth, when we were arrested by seventy frenchmen, who conducted us to a town called New Orleans, near the mouth of the Mississipy. There we were closely examined by the Governor[19] and were grievously accused that our purpose had been to spy out the way for an army to come to destroy them and their country. Nothing appearing against us to support this charge, except weak suspicions, we hoped to be put at liberty, but on the contrary were condemned to three years in prison. And I verily believe that [if left to their mercies] we will not be

[18] As appears from his despatches Governor Gooch was absent from Virginia, in command of the American troops in the Carthagena expedition only from October 2, 1740, until the end of March, 1741. He returned wounded and sick leaving what he called his "little army" of Americans in Cuba. It must have been by reason of his physical condition that Howard was unable to see him again before setting out on his expedition.

[19] Bienville.

released until death has pity on us. To that fate we have indeed already been very near, partly by reason of the darkness of our dungeons and partly by reason of the bad food given us. But God having pity has restored our strength. And yet up to this moment we have no hope for our deliverance except in the Wisdom and Charity of your Majesty, our lives being as a sacrifice in the hands of cruel men.

"That your Royal Majesty and your blessed family may continue to enjoy the love of God, our Celestial father, by the merit of our Redeemer, Jesus Christ, and the Consolation of the Holy Ghost, is and continually shall be the prayers of your humble subjects whose names are subscribed.

"John Hayward
Josias Hayward, my Son
John Patteet
John Peter Salling
Charles Cinekler.

"New Orleans, June 21, 1743.

"In consideration of our deplorable condition, we ask pardon for our bad writing."

We shall see that eventually Salley escaped, so that Howard was of those sent to France by Vaudreuil in December, 1744. The Heath tradition as to his subsequent adventures is varied in detail, but in substance confirmed by a statement by Col. Fry in his *Account,* viz: "Howard and his men had been confined a long time at New Orleans, when, after the French war broke out, he and one or two of them were shipped for France, but in the Voyage were taken by an English ship and carryed to London, where I suppose he gave a fuller account of his Expedition than I can collect from an imperfect Journal." There is no evidence that Howard made any report in London, nor of what became of him. Unfortunately, there is no such local record for him in Virginia as there is for Salley.[20]

[20] There was an Irish family named Howard living in Stafford in 1692 when one "Thomas Howard, cooper," administered upon the estate of a kinsman of the same name (Stafford records, MS.)

There was a John Howard who served on the first Grand Jury of

We come next to Salley's Journal as Fry transcribed and commented on it. Tested not only by the confirmatory documents, but by the topography and incidental references, this seems now amply to bear out the confidence which both Col. Fry and Dr. John Mitchell placed in it.

A Brief Account of the Travels of John Peter Salley, a German Who Lives in the County of Augusta in Virginia.

It may be necessary before I enter upon the particular passage of my Travels, to inform my Reader, that what they are to meet with in the following Narrative, is only what I retained in my Memory; For when we were taken by the French we were robbed of all our papers, that contained any writings relative to our Travels.

1740. In the year 1740, I came from Pennsylvania to that part of Orange County now called Augusta; and settled in a fork of James River close under the Blue Ridge of Mountains on the West Side, where I now live.[21]

Orange county in 1735 and was surveyor of the road "from the Chapple Road to the Rapidan Cave's Ford" (Scott *Orange County*, 29, 30). He may have been our man but as we have seen he was living on "Sherando" river in 1737. Mr. Cartmel says (*Shenandoah Valley Pioneers*, pp. 475, 482) that there was an Irish family of Howards living in Frederick from the earliest settlement of the Valley. If our man returned to Virginia he may have been the "John Howard of the county of Frederick" who on May 16, 1753, had a grant of a lot in Winchester (*Northern Neck Grant Book*, H 382). The John Howard who appears in Chalkley's *Abstracts* from 1764 to 1768, in association with the Capt. John Buchanan who copied Salley's journal, seems to have been of a younger generation.

[21] John Peter Salley had a patent (*Virginia Land Register*, xix, 997) dated July 6, 1741, for 400 acres "in that part of Orange County called Augusta in the first fork of James River on the West side of the blue Ridge of Mountains." Fry identified the site with Salley's name on his map, at a point on James River just above Balcony Falls, in what is now Rockbridge. It appears from Chalkley, *Abstracts from the Records of Augusta County, Virginia* (1912), that the author of the Journal was a member of Capt. John McDowell's company before his expedition with Howard. (The muster roll among the *Preston Papers* in the Wisconsin Historical Society, printed by Chalkley, ii, 507, is not dated but is related by Waddell to 1742. The fact that Salley is on it would indicate that it must have been made before March, 1741/2.) and, in 1746, after his return, "qualified as Captain of Foot." (*Augusta Order Book*, i, 135.) In February, 1747/8, he had his lands processioned and, after several real estate transactions and a suit for

1741/2. In the month of *March*, 1741/2 One John Howard came to my house, and told me, that he had received a Commission from our Governor to travel to the westward of this Colony, as far as the River Mississippi, in order to make Discovery of the Country, and that as a regward for his Labour, he had the promise of an Order of Council for Ten Thousand Acres of Land; and at the same time obliged himself to give equal Shares of said Land to such men as would go in Company with him to search the Country as above. Whereupon I and other two men, Vizt [John Poteat] and Charles Sinclair[22] (his own Son Josiah Harwood having already joined with him) entered into Covenant with him, binding ourselves to each other in a certain writing, and accordingly prepared for our Journey in a very unlucky hour to me and my poor Family.

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breach of promise of marriage on behalf of a daughter, died in 1755, leaving a will dated 25 December, 1754 (proved 19 March, 1755, *Augusta W. B.*, ii. pp. 92, 111, 124). Two of his sons, George Adam and John, who took the James River lands under the will sold them in 1760 and 1762, describing themselves at first as "of Cumberland County, North Carolina," and later, "of Orange County, North Carolina." (*Augusta D. B.*, ix, 25; xi, 34.)

The "descendants of John Peter Salling" who made statements in 1848 for Dr. Draper, lived in Rockbridge, but Dr. Draper recorded that others were then living in Tennessee and Kentucky who spelled their name Sallee. In the Augusta records it is spelled variously Salley, Sally and Salling.

Whatever was the original name our John Peter was undoubtedly one of the Switzers who came to Virginia through Pennsylvania as a consequence of the activities of Michel and Graffenried (*Va. Mag.* xxix, 1) and must be distinguished from that Pierre (or Peter) Sallé who was peacefully baptizing children in the Huguenot colony at Manakintown during the years John Peter was absent on his travels (Brock Huguenot Emigration to Virginia, 1886, pp. 103, 113).

Mr. A. S. Salley, Jr., of the Historical Commission of South Carolina, advises that the Salley family of that State descends from Henry Salley, who had lands laid out for him in Orangeburgh Township in 1735, or sometime before John Peter says he left Pennsylvania.

[22] In the Fry transcript a blank was left for the name preceding that of Sinclair. We have supplied "Poteat" from the Howard petition, where in the French text it is spelled "Putteet." In Chalkley's *Abstracts* (iii, 252) there appears, under date of 6 February, 1745/6, an assignment of an interest in lands on the South Branch of James River (i. e., near Salley's) by "John Pateet of Frederick County, yeoman," to "Charles Sinckler, laborer." These are undoubtedly our men after they had respectively returned to Virginia. In 1753 (Chalkley, iii, 309) James Patton conveys other lands on James River to "John Peteet," while later references to Sinclair in the Augusta records indicate that he followed the western movement of the frontier down New River.

1741/2. On the sixteenth of March, 1742, we set off from my House and went to Cedar Creek about five miles, where is a Natural Bridge over said Creek, reaching from the Hill on the one side to the Hill on the other. It is a solid Rock and is two hundred and three feet high, having a very large Spacious arch, where the Water runs thro',[23] we then proceeded as far as Mondongachate, now called Woods River,[24] which is eighty-five Miles, where we killed five Buffoloes, and with their hides covered the Frame of a Boat;[25] which was so large as to carry all our Company, and all our provisions and Utensels, with which we passed down the said River two hundred and fifty-two miles as we supposed,[26] and found it very Rocky, having a great many Falls therein, one of which we computed to be thirty feet perpendicular and all along surrounded with inaccessible Mountains, high precipices, which obliged us to leave said River.[27] We went then a south west course by Land eighty five Miles, where we came to a small River,[28] and there we made a little Boat, which carried only two men and our provisions. The rest travelled by Land for two Days and then we came to a large River, where we enlarged our Barge, so as she carried all our Company, and whatever Loading we had to put into her. We supposed that we went down this River Two Hundred and Twenty Miles, and had a tolerable good passage; there being only two places, that were difficult by reason of Falls. Where we came to this River the Country is mountainous, but the farther down the plainer in those Mountains, we found great plenty of Coals, for which we named

[23] This seems to be the earliest description of the Natural Bridge. It is curious that Fry did not mark it on his map.

[24] Fry notes here in the margin, "The New River." For the discovery of this river in 1671 when it was named for Col. Abraham Wood of Fort Henry (Petersburg) see Alvord, *First Explorations*, 1912.

[25] This device may be a testimony of Howard's origin. Irish fishermen still use coracles made with the hides of bullocks.

[26] Salley's distances do not bear critical analysis. One can understand that they seemed greater to him than they do to a traveller in a Pullman car.

[27] It was a wise decision. In Fayette County, says Martin (*Gazetteer of Virginia*, 1836), New River "is borne down with so much force and precipitancy as to render its crossing hazardous . . . the falls being so rapidly successive as to resemble artificial steps."

[28] The northeast fork of Coal River.

it Coal River.[29] Where this River and Woods river meets[30] the North Mountains end, and the Country appears very plain and is well water'd, there are plenty of Rivulets, clear Fountains and running Streams and very fertile Soil. From the mouth of Coal River, to the River Alleghany we computed to be ninety two miles, and on the sixth day of *May* we came to Allegany which we supposed to be three Quarters of a mile, [broad][31] and from here to the great Falls on this River is reckoned four hundred and forty four Miles, there being a large Spacious open Country on each side of the River, and is well watered abounding with plenty of Fountains small streams and large Rivers; and is very high and fertile Soil. At this Time we found the Clover to be as high as the middle of a man's leg. In general all the Woods over the Land is Ridgey, but plain, well timbered and hath plenty of all kind of Wood, that grows in Common with us in this Colony (excepting pine). The Falls[32] mentioned above are three miles long in which is a small Island, the body of the Stream running on the North side, through which is no passing by reason of great Rocks and large Whirlpools, by which we went down on the south side of said Island without much Danger or Difficulty and in time of a Fresh in the River, men may pass either up or down, they being active or careful. About twenty Miles below the Falls the Land appeared to be somewhat Hilly the Ridges being higher, and continued so for the Space of

[29] With this description compare Martin, "Coal Rover . . . is about 100 yards wide at its mouth and does not vary this width for many miles above. It is a beautiful meandering stream which runs through a romantic Valley, without receiving any tributary of consequence from the juncture of its northeast and west fork until it receives Little Coal River [Louisa] from the south. . . . The lower falls are situated five miles above the mouth and five miles above these are the upper falls." The "romantic Valley" is now black with collieries and railroads. Fry misspelled the name "Cole" on his map and was followed on several of the later maps. As a result, that spelling may still be encountered occasionally.

[30] Below Charleston, W. Va., so that at this confluence Salley's "Woods River" was the Great Kanawha.

[31] The Ohio at the mouth of the Great Kanawha (Point Pleasant) where, in August, 1749, Celeron de Bienville planted one of his plates, "pour monument du renouvellement de possession que nous avons pris de la ditte Riviere Oyo." One would like to know Celeron's authority for his "renouvellement."

[32] The falls of the Ohio at Louisville.

fifty Miles down the River, but neither Rocky nor Stony, but a rich Soil as is above mentioned. Joyning this high Land below is a very level flat Country on both sides of the River, and is so for an Hundred and fifty Miles, abounding with all the advantages mentioned above, and a much richer Soil; We then met with a kind of Ridge that seemed to Extend across the Country as far as we could view and bore North and South. In Seven Miles we passed it, when we found the Country level (as is mentioned before), but not having such plenty of running Streams, yet a richer Soil. On the seventh day of *June* we entered into the River Missisippi, which we computed to be five miles wide, and yet in some places it is not above one mile over, having in most places very high Banks, and in other places it overflows. The current is not swift but easy to pass either up or down, and in all our passage we found great plenty of Fish, and wild fowl in abundance. In the River Missisippi above the mouth of Allegany[33] is a large Island on which are three Towns inhabited by the French,[34] who maintain Commerce and Trade both with the

[33] Fry notes in the margin "Ouabache" and in his *Account* comments: "The River Alleghany heads with Susquehanna and the water of the lakes and running Southwesterly receives the Streams from the Allegany Ridge that way as the New River, coming from the South, does those Southward, *and where they meet they compose the River Ouabache*, named by the French, St. Jerome." President Burwell testified that Fry had retired from William and Mary College "to the back Settlements [Albemarle] in Order to raise a Fortune for his Family." This, then, was the motive of his dreams of the west which actuated the remainder of his life. He made what was in the Virginia of his time an unusual collection of material about New France. James Maury (*Memoirs of a Huguenot Family*, Putnam's reprint, p. 390) says that he had a copy of Daniel Coxe's *Carolana* (published 1722, 1726, 1727 and 1741) and so, of course, knew Coxe's map of the Mississippi, but the statement quoted above shows other and better knowledge of the Ohio. It seems likely from what he says that Fry had before him a copy of Herman Moll's "New Map of the North Part of America claimed by France," 1720, the legend of which declares that "the Southwest part of Louisiana is done after a French Map Published at Paris in 1718." Here the Ohio is laid down with approximate correctness, if without convincing land marks and, although Coxe had called it by its Indian name, "Hohio," is marked "Ouabach, now called by the French R. St. Jerome." The Great Kanawha is sketched in vaguely as "Sault R.", and the true Wabash is indicated still more vaguely but not named. The Tennessee River is shown emptying *into the Mississippi* below the mouth of the Ohio and is marked "Cusatees or Thegategos R." i. e., Cherokee River.

[34] Fry comments: "This as well as his account of the Salt Work and Lead Mine he had from information after he was taken for they did not go up the River." The island was Kaskaskia.

French of Cannada, and those French on the mouth of the said River. In the fork between Allegany and Missisippi are certain Salt Springs, where the Inhabitants of the Towns mentioned above make their Salt. Also they have there a very rich Lead Mine which they have opened and it affords them a Considerable gain.[35] From the Falls mentioned above in the River Allegany to the mouth of said River is four Hundred fifty Miles, from thence to the Town of New Orleans is One Thousand four Hundred and ten Miles, and is Uninhabited excepting fifty Leagues above New Orleans. It is a large spacious plain Country endowed with all the natural Advantages, that is a moderate healthy Climate, Sweet water, rich Soil, and a pure fresh Air, which contribute to the Benefit of Mankind. We held on our passage down the River Missisippi [until] the second day of *July,* and about nine o' the Clock in the Morning we went on Shore to cook our Breakfast. But we were suddenly surprised by a Company of Men,[36] Viz.t to the Number of Ninety, Consisting of French men Negroes, & Indians, who took us prisoners and carried us to the Town of

[35] Fry comments: "Monsieur Joutel in his Journal takes notice of a Salt Spring which his Indian Guides showed him between the Mouths of Ouabache and the River Islinois and that I suppose is the Place where the French make Salt. These French Towns, Salt Work and Lead Mine, must be in Virginia."

Joutel was one of the companions of LaSalle on his last fatal expedition to Texas in 1684 and returned via Fort St. Louis on the Illinois in 1687. (See Parkman, *LaSalle.*) His *Journal Historique* was published in Paris, 1713; an English translation appeared the following year and was reprinted in 1719. Fry evidently had a copy of one of these editions. Joutel is included in French's *Historical Collections of Louisiana,* i, 183, and should be read with Dumont's continuation (*ibid.,* v, 1) which describes the Illinois fort in 1753. Moll's map (1720) indicates "French Factory" at the mouth of the "Ilinese R." and lower down on the Missouri side of the Mississippi "Salt R." with "Salt Magazine [i. e. Ste Genevieve] and the general description, "This whole County is full of Mines."

[36] Fry comments: "The men who took them came from that Settlement [the Illinois] in a Fleet of Small Craft guarded by an armed Schooner because the Cherokees and other Indians at War with the French sometimes intercept them on the Mississippi."

As it happens, we have a graphic record of such an adventure, the very year before Howard and Salley were on the Mississippi, in the Journal of Antoine Bonnefoy (Mereness, *Travels in the American Colonies,* 1916, p. 241). In 1741 he was intercepted by the Cherokees while making his way from New Orleans to the Illinois and was carried up the Tennessee River to captivity in the Western North Carolina mountains.

New Orleans, which was about one Hundred Leagues from us when we were taken, and after being examined upon Oath before the Governor[37] first separately one by One, and then All together, we were committed to close Prison, we not knowing then (nor even yet) how long they intended to confine us there. During our stay in Prison we had allowed us a pound and half of Bread a man each Day, and Ten pound of pork p Month for each man. Which allowance was duly given to us for the space of *Eighteen Months,* and after that we had only one pound of Rice Bread, and one pound of Rice for each man p Day, and one Quart of Bear's Oil for each man p. Month, which allowance was continued to us untill I made my Escape. Whilst I was confined in Prison I had many Visits made to me by the French and Dutch who lived there, and grew intimate and familiar with some of them, by whom I was informed of the Manner of Government, Laws, Strength and Wealth of the Kingdom of Louisiana as they call it, and from the whole we learned, that the Government is Tyrannical, The Common People groan under the Load of Oppression, and Sigh for Deliverance. The Governor is the Chief Merchant, and inhances all the trade into his own hands, depriving the Planters of selling their Commodities to any other, but himself, and allowing them only such prices as he pleases.[38] And with respect to Religion, there's little to be found amongst them, but those who profess any Religion at all, it's the Church of Rome. In the Town are nine Clergymen four Jesuits and five Capuchin Friers. They have likewise one Nunnery in which are nine Nuns. Notwithstanding the Fertility and Richness of the Soil, The Inhabitants are generally poor as a Consequence of the Oppression they meet with from their Rulers, neither is the Settling of the Country, or Agriculture in any Measure encouraged by the Legislature.—One thing I had almost forgot, Viz.t we were told by some of the French who first settled there, that about *forty* years ago, when the French first

[37] Bienville.

[38] All this seems to be mere gossip derived from Salley's fellow prisoner the disaffected creole Baudran, whom we are soon to meet. Gayarré says that when Bienville "left Louisiana forever, although he was under the displeasure of the court, the colonists were loud in expressing their regrets."

discovered the place, and made attempt to settle therein, there were then pretty *many English* settled on both sides of the River Missisippi, and one Twenty Gun Ship lay in the River, what became of the Ship we did not hear, but we were informed that the English Inhabitants were all destroyed by the Natives by the Instigation of the French.[39]

I now begin to speak of the strength of the Country, and by the best Account I cou'd gather I did not find, that there are above four Hundred and fifty effective Men of the Militia in all that Country, and not above one Hundred and fifty Soldiers under pay in and about the Town of New Orleans, 'tis true they have Sundry Forts in which they keep some men, but they are so weak and despicable as not worth taking notice of, with regard to the Strengthening of the County, having in some of them only six men, in others Ten men, the strongest of all those places is at the Mouth of the Missisippi In which are thirty Men, and Fifty Leagues from thence is a Town called Mumvell[40] nine Leagues from the Mouth of a River of the same Name in which is a Garrison, that Consists of Seventy Soldiers.

After I had been confined in close Prison *above two Years,* and all Expectation of being set at Liberty failing, I begun to think of making my Escape out of Prison, one of which I put in Practice, and which Succeeded in the following Manner. There was a certain French Man, who was born in that Country, and had some time before sold his Rice to the Spaniards for which he was put in Prison, and it Cost him six Hundred Peices of Eight before he got clear. He being tired with the Misery and Oppression under which the poor Country People

[39] Fry comments: "If this be true it is most likely to be known in England or Jamaica: and a Proof of it would give the English a Right by Possession to the Southern part of the river as well as to the Northern by King James the First's Charter to Virginia."

While undoubtedly there were Carolina traders on the Mississippi as early as 1700 (the facts are collected in Surrey, *The Commerce of Louisiana during the French Régime,* Columbia University Studies, 1917) the story of English in the Mississippi forty years before 1742, which Salley heard, was probably a tradition of the elder Daniel Coxe's expedition up that river in 1698, for which see Margry, *Découvertes et établissements,* iv, 361, 395, Daniel Coxe in the preface to his *Carolana,* and his father's *Memorial* in Alvord, *First Explorations,* p. 248. As Fry knew Coxe's book, he evidently did not believe this part of it.

[40] Fry notes in the margin, "Mobile."

Labour, formed a Design of removing his Family to South Carolina. Which Design was discovered, and he was again put in Prison in the Dungeon, and made fast in Irons, and after a formal Tryal, he was condemned to be a Slave for Ten Years, besides the expence of seven Hundred peices of Eight. With this Miserable French Man I became intimate & familiar, and as he was an active man, and knew the Country he promised, if I could help him off with his Irons, and we all got clear of the Prison, he would conduct us safe untill we were out of Danger. We then got a small file from a Soldier wherewith to cut the Irons and on the 25th day of *October, 1744* we put our Design in Practice. While the French man was very busie in the Dungeon in cutting the Irons, we were as industrious without in breaking the Door of the Dungeon, and Each of us finished our Jobb at one Instant of time, which had held us for about six hours; by three of the Clock in the Morning with the help of a Rope which I had provided beforehand, we let our Selves down over the Prison Walls, and made our Escape[41] Two Miles from the Town that night, where we lay close for two days. We then removed to a place three Miles from the Town, where one of the good old Fryers of which I spoke before, nourished us four Days. On the Eighth Day after we made our Escape, we came to a Lake[42] seven Leagues from the Town but by this Time we had got a Gun and some Ammunition, the next Day we shot two large Bulls, and with their Hides made us a boat, in which we passed the Lake in the Night. We tied the Shoulder Blades of the Bulls to small sticks, which served us for paddles and passed a point, where there were thirteen men lay in wait for us, but

[41] Vaudreuil's despatch of 29 December, 1744 (*Arch. Nat. Colonies*, C[13] 28: 273) confirms this. Salley's creole companion was one Baudran who sometime before had been arrested for robbery and was condemned to ten years in the galleys, but escaped to the Havana with the intention of making his way to Carolina and thence among the Indians "of that Nation." He was, however, returned to New Orleans by the Spanish and there was imprisoned in irons (legs, hands and neck) until permission could be obtained to send him to France. After his escape with Salley he sent word to the Governor that his purpose was to enlist his friends among the Choctaws to intercede for his pardon, which, says Vaudreuil, "will be difficult to refuse because he is a brave and enterprising man, much beloved by the Indians, and if he shall ally himself with the enemies of France will be a dangerous enemy."

[42] Lake Pontchartrain.

Thro' Mercy we escaped from them undiscovered. After we had gone by Water sixty miles we went on Shore, we left our Boat as a Witness of our Escape to the French. We travelled thirty miles by Land to the River Shoktare,[43] where our French man's father lived. In this Journey we passed thro' a Nation of Indians, who were very kind to us, and Carried us over two large Bays.[44] In this place we Tarried Two Months and ten Days in very great Danger, for search was made for us everywhere by Land and Water and Orders to Shoot us when found. Great Rewards were promised by the Governor to the King of the Indians (mentioned above) to take us, which he refused, and in the meantime was very kind by giving provisions and informing us of our Danger from time to time. After they had given over Searching for us, and we having got a large Periaugue and other necessary things for our voyage, and on the 25th of *January* our French man and one Negro boy (which he took to wait on him) and another French man and we being all armed and well provided for our Voyage, we set off at a place called the belle Fountain (or in English fine Spring)[45] and Sailed fifty Leagues to the head of S[t]. Rose's Bay,[46] and there left our Vessel and travelled by Land Thirty Leagues to the Fork Indians,[47] where the English trade. Then there were three with them, and there

[43] Pearl River. The friendly aid of the Choctaws is an evidence of the relations Baudran had with them.

[44] Bay St. Louis and Biloxi Bay.

[45] On D'Anville's map of Mobile and the adjacent coast (1732, reproduced in Hamilton, *Colonial Mobile*, p. 166) "Belle Fontaine" is marked on the bay shore between Biloxi and the mouth of Pascagoula. On Bellin's *Carte de la Louisiane et des Pays voisins*, 1750, it is marked "La basse Fontaine." The "Fontainbleau" of the modern map evidently indicates the site.

[46] The Santa Rosa Bay of the contemporary maps is now known, after the stream which drains into it, as "Choctawhatchee Bay" but the old name remains in "Santa Rosa Island," east of Pensacola.

The strategy of Salley and his companion was to avoid the French at Mobile and at Fort Toulouse (Montgomery), and to strike as soon as possible one of the Carolina trading paths out of Savana Town (Fort Moore, opposite Augusta) which then traversed north Georgia and Alabama, by which they could, as they did, make their way to Charles Town.

[47] These were the "Lower Creeks" living in the fork between the Chattahoochie and Flint Rivers, with whom Carolina then maintained trading relations.

we stayed five Days. The Natives were to us kind and generous, there we left the two French men and Negro boy, and on the tenth of *February* we set off and Travelled by Land up the River Giscaculfufa or Biscaculfufa,[48] one Hundred and thirty five Miles, passing several Indian Towns the Natives being very hospitable and kind, and came to one Finlas an Indian Trader, who lives among the Ugu Nation. On the first of *March* we left Mr Finlas, and on the sixteenth we arrived at fort Augustus[49] in the Province of Georgia. On the nineteenth instant we left fort Augustus and on the first of April we arrived at Charles Town, and waited on the Governor,[50] who examined us Concerning our Travels &c. and he detained us in Charles Town eighteen Days, and made us a present of eighteen pounds of their Money, which did no more than defray our Expences whilst in that Town.

I had delivered to the Governor a Copy of my Journal, which when I asked again he refused to give me, but having obtained from him a Pass we went on board of a small Vessel bound for Virginia. On the Thirteenth of *April*, the same Day about two of the Clock we were taken by the French in Cape Roman and kept Prisoners till eleven of the Clock next Day, at which time the French after having robbed us of all the Provisions we had for our Voyage or Journey, put us into a Boat we being twelve men in Number, and so left us to the Mercy of the Seas and Winds.

On the fifteenth instant we arrived again at Charles Town[51]

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[48] Neither of these names appear on the contemporary maps. The river was the Chattahoochie on which a Dutch map of "Florida" of 1734 (followed by the map in Rapin, *History of England*, 1744) shows "Hogolegos" in the vicinity of Columbus, Ga. This was a village of the Yuchi (*Handbook Am. Indians*, ii, 1003) who were Salley's "Ugo Nation."

[49] Augusta, on the Savannah River.

[50] He was James Glen, a Scot, who came to South Carolina as Governor in 1743.

[51] The *South Carolina Gazette*, published at Charles Town, carried the following news item in its issue of April 15, 1745:

"Capt. Norman in a small Schooner belonging to Mr. Hugh Cartwright of this town and Messrs. George Ducat and Robert Dunston two of our Pilots with their boat, were taken on Friday last off Cape Romain in their Passage to Winyaw, by a French Privateer from Port Louis on St. Domingo, call'd L' Aventure, Capt. Martin Torres, who (after having plundered the Pilot Boat) gave Ducat a Pass in French

and were examined before the Governor concerning our being taken by the French. We were now detained three Days before we could get another Pass from the Governor, we having destroyed the former, when we were taken by the French, and then were dismissed, being in a strange Place, far from Home, destitute of Friends, Cloathing, Money and Arms, and in that deplorable Condition had been obliged to undertake a Journey of five Hundred Miles, but a Gentleman, who was Commander of a Privateer, and then lay at Charles Town with whom we had discoursed several times, gave to each of us a Gun and a Sword, and would have given us Ammunition, but that he had but little. On the Eighteenth Day of *April,* we left Charles Town, the second time, and travelled by Land,[52] and on the seventeenth Day of *May, 1745* we arrived at my House, having been absent three years Two Months and one Day, from my family, having in that time by the nicest Calculation I am able to make, travelled by Land and Water four thousand six hundred and six Miles since I left my own House till I returned Home again.

p John Peter Salley.

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not to be retaken by his concert, and put 12 English Prisoners on Board, with which he arriv'd last Night."

Acknowledgment is made to Mr. A. S. Salley, Jr., for this further voucher of the good faith of our document.

[52] It seems probable that they followed the "Path to Virginia by way of Cape Fear," as marked on George Hunter's map of South Carolina in 1730. This map is reproduced in *Bulletin No.* 4 of the Historical Commission of South Carolina, 1917.

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